

A
H Y M N
TO THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

BY EDWARD BEDINGFELD, ESQ.
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A
H Y M N.

OFT did thy Name in realms of light inspire
Th' Angelick strain : oft the celestial Choir
With voices jubilant, with high acclaim,
Met the benignant progress of thy fame :
Let then Mortality's weak accents join,
Like distant echoes, with that praise divine.

To thee, oh ! sacred Patroness, 'tis giv'n,
As lour th' impending punishments of Heav'n,
To stay the sentence ; and with pitying care
Shield the pale sinner's desolated pray'r.
With op'ning gleams of mild Remission's ray
'Tis thine to chase the phantoms of Dismay
That haunt th' awak'ning hour ; when first the Soul
Sees the sad volume of its guilt unroll.

But chief to those, whose mindful steps proceed
In fair succession of each virtuous deed,
Thy succours bend : yet, ah ! who e'er essay'd
To trace th' unnumber'd prodigies of Aid,
That from the radiant east, their earliest seat,
Arose the lucid circuit to complete
Thro' ev'ry clime : nor was their west'ring course
Not mark'd with splendor of unlesseⁿd force.

Thee, in thy mortal day, th' Almighty saw
Fill'd with all grace, yet sunk in rev'rent awe ;
Intent ~~alone~~ his sov'reign will to seek,
With mind so constant, and with heart so meek,
With love so fervent : now his gradual hand
Leads thy triumphant honours thro' each land.
Now sculptur'd gifts the stately fane emblaze ;
Each path conducts them, and each wave conveys :
Hope soothes the pious Suppliant, while there
Stand the rich records of the prosper'd pray'r.
Oppos'd in vain, the ^a Pow'rs of Darknes wag'd
Their wily war ; in vain NESTORIUS rag'd
With voice profane : e'en ^b then aloft did shine,
In brightest pomp, Maternity divine.
Hence ev'ry Age to thy victorious cause
Joins in the duteous tribute of applause.

^a I will put enmities between thee and the woman, &c.—Gen. 3.—15.

^b The general Council of Ephesus, in 431.

A regal mandate Persia could behold
For Esther cancell'd, and the sceptred gold
Extend in saving sign: while here we see
A Law, that chains the world, enchain not thee.
Children of wrath, our sin-infected Race
Deplores its early fall: preserving Grace
In thee primæval innocence maintain'd;
° No cloud that darken'd, and no spot that stain'd.

Thy earthly dwelling, thy retir'd abode,
Where came the saving Embassy from God,
Fell not in war's wild storm: yet there no more
With solemn rites could warm Devotion pour
Its festal strains; no patient Pilgrim there
From distant climes his willing steps could bear
Thro' conquer'd Galilee; athwart the way
The banner'd Crescent wav'd with sullen sway.
Far to Dalmatia's hills then Angel-hands
° Convey'd the holy walls; when Night expands
Its cloudy mantle, and from ev'ry eye
Curtain'd the rapid progress thro' the sky:
Till gave th' Italian coast their destin'd rest;
Refuge of All, and glory of the West!
° There falling flames, around the summit drawn,
Oft of thy birth announc'd th' auspicious dawn

° There is no spot in thee.—Cant 4.—7.

° In 1291.

° Turfelinus, Lauret. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 17.

To mortal fight ; while heav'n's own lights array
Thy natal mansion on thy natal day.

Each nobler virtue, each sublimer gift,
The heart to perfect, and the soul to lift,
Were thine above what e'er, in high degree,
They lend to mark exalted Sanctity :
The firm Apostle's untir'd zeal above,
The Martyr's patience, and the Seraph's love.

No sigh unheard, no suff'ring unallay'd,
Broke the connected chain of heav'nly aid.
Thro' thee inspir'd, that gracious Order rose,
Which stream'd a ray of Ransom on the woes
Of each desponding Slave : the promis'd Boon
Eas'd the wan labour of their burning noon ;
A lenient calm to night and darkness gave ;
And Freedom glimmer'd thro' the captive's cave.

Midst Cherub-Forms its seat where Mercy rear'd,
Symbolic once, the real Ark appear'd
In thee completed : still rever'd attends,
Its living track where e'er Religion bends
Wide o'er the globe. See the new World implores
Alike thy gen'ral help ! Brazilian shores
Resound thy praise, and Plata's mighty stream
Rolls not unconscious of the grateful theme ;

^f See the prayer of the Church, Sept. 24.

Thro' soft Peru's, thro' Chili's breezy vale,
Spread in the floating fragrance of the gale;
Nor yet unheard midst rugged winds, that blow
Keen with the rigour of Canadian snow.

To thee, on stormy seas, from many a prow
Ascends, in humble confidence, the vow.
From * Nippon's cedar-groves and mountains steep,
And sister Isles, that glitter o'er the Deep;
Where lively Faith its awful trial stood,
From lands once crimson'd with the Martyr's blood;
Oft rose the Client's pray'r. Thy Name prevail'd
Thro' China's realm: nor there the Converts fail'd
With Invocation's hallow'd strain to mark
Their daily zeal: from where the burnish'd Bark,
With vivid hues that gilds the parted spray,
Traces by eastern coasts its glossy way;
To where on fields afar, at ev'ning's fall,
Stretch the long shadows of the ^b lofty Wall,
Was known th' Angelick Message.—Still may bend
Each clime to Truth, and each its call attend!
E'en now its voice beyond th' Atlantic wakes:
And many a ⁱ Stream, that near the northern lakes
Flow from their founts, and from the wood-crown'd plain
Wander thro' leafy margins to the main;

* The largest of the Japanese Islands.

^b The great Wall of China.

ⁱ Delaware, Hudson's River, &c.

Thro' rich savannas, or thro' cultur'd ground ;
Attentive hear the salutary sound.

Rais'd from the tomb's brief slumber to forestal,
With instant glory, Resurrection's call ;
Grac'd by thy Son with delegated pow'r
O'er Earth's wide compass, and to Time's last hour ;
Oh ! while we thus revere thy high renown,
Thy lunar footstool, and thy starry crown,
Thy sunny robe ; (for so in emblem's guise
At Patmos to the rapt Apostle's eyes
* The radiant Vision of thy virtues came)
Deign to bestow the patronage we claim
For life's deciding close : oh ! deign to own
Thy duteous clients at their Saviour's throne.
Nor here withhold from deep distress, relief ;
Hear in the midnight of involving Grief ;
In Sickness, hear ! and where its feeble cry
Steals from the couch of helpless Poverty.
Far from our wish be all that Wealth affords,
Its youth of plenty, or its age of hoards ;
And Science far, that heedless of its guide
Sooths the vain vigils of a letter'd Pride ;
Till lost in doubt, each future view resign'd,
Wanders, in penal anarchy, the Mind.

* Apocal. ch. 12.—1.

But ours be Faith, the soul's imparted day ;
And rising Hope, that brightens in its ray ;
Celestial Charity, Contrition's tear,
And Peace, soft-whisper'd in the docile ear.
Ours be the aim thy Son's blest steps to trace ;
Form'd from his Heart, and strengthen'd by his Grace.

But over the world, the Lord's appointed day;
And things to come, that he gives in his ray;
Celestial Church, Communion's feast,
And peace, for which he's in the world's best
Ours be the aim, the Lord's be the hope to trace;
To find him in the light, and then to see by his Grace.